

Views and Reviews in the World of Art



Original lithograph by John Copley, Frederick Keppel & Co.

(Continued from preceding page.)

conquest of the fair as absolutely the easiest thing in all the world. Ariadne is going to acquiesce, but the train of her thoughts is scarcely academic. She could tell a thing or two that she learned from Theseus in the Ile de Naxos to Mr. Kenyon Cox's Venus an' she chose. This young fellow with the towed yellow hair will scarcely be considered a great catch by the people of her set. But a divorcee, or a grass widow, or whatever it was that Ariadne was, cannot be too independent. The thing is to get ranges in society once more. If she combed out and took those ridiculous vine leaves from his hair and dressed him up in one of Einstein, Schwartzkoeffler & Selmax's suits he mightn't be half bad. So she is going to accept the goatherd's, or I suppose I should say Dionysus's, offer. It is then to be a marriage de convenience? Fi, done, Mr. Burroughs! To be sure, marriages de convenience are still arranged in good society. But this is the first to occur in American art.

Proserpine, according to this artist, appears to be past mistress of the womanly art of self-defence, and her attitude toward Pluto is one that Mme. Ariadne-Dionysus (the marriage has already taken place) would heartily approve of. It will not avail, of course, but there is all the more necessity for a perfect attitude just for that reason. Were it Anna Pavlova instead of poor little Proserpine who was being carried off, she could not portray fainting reluctance more beautifully. It is a matter upon which surely we may all congratulate ourselves, that our American Proserpine has such lovely manners.

But, in spite of Mr. Burroughs's art, Proserpine went to h—, as you all know, and Proserpine's mother felt the matter more keenly than Grecian mothers usually did. That's because, no doubt, since coming to America, she has fully grasped just what h— means, and realizes as never before the handicap the adventure places upon her daughter's career. Demeter welcomes Proserpine back home from hades, with a face of ashen grayness. What is there left for Proserpine, but the stage? True, she has talent for it . . .

These Grecian episodes occurred, as I said before, in America, and some of them quite close at hand—over on Long Island. I, for one, am pleased to hear it. Surely that runaway princess is sleeping on the bench at Peconic? What of it? Runaway princesses have to sleep somewhere, and she was certainly lucky to have struck Peconic. That chap in the corner of the "Sleeping Beauty in the Wood" picture appears to be a con-

scripted soldier from Yaphank. Is he the Fairy Prince in disguise? Well, it's a good disguise, isn't it? If you say no, you're pro-German.

Mezzotints on Show at Grolier Club

The chronological exhibition of mezzotints now on public view at the Grolier Club is instructive as well as artistically pleasing. It ranges from Von Siegen to Barney; including two states of the first of mezzotints, the portrait of Amelia Elizabeth, the Landgravine of Hesse, achieved by Von Siegen about 1642, and eleven mezzotints by Prince Rupert, Von Siegen's royal and illustrious pupil.

From these the collection extends in sequence to the finished and resplendent productions of the English mezzotinters who gave, as the able preface to the catalogue suggests, added lustre to the reigns of the Georges.

This catalogue, voicing no doubt the orthodox view, speaks of the first portrait by Von Siegen with respect, but adds that it is "not precisely a lovely thing." To be sure it isn't, but the two subsequent portraits by Von Siegen are, and all the Prince Rupert prints are. Not to say so is to conform to the approved worship of the fashionable English great period.

But I who am never orthodox, only honest, must shock the devout members of the Grolier Club by confessing that I would not exchange, were they mine, all the Georgian portraits in the world for the dozen or so earliest mezzotints in the present collection. I have long entertained a theory, which still persists in spite of my occasional attempts to suppress it, that that those who assist at the birth of a new phase of art become its prophets and chief proclaimers, and that all subsequent apostles to the new creed have nothing to do but to perfect the workings of the church. They have nothing to add to the spirit. In literature, music, painting, and in all the arts into which I have dipped, I have found confirmation of this idea. I seem to encounter it again in this show of mezzotints. Since I value spirit above mechanical excellence I found my attention glued whilst at the Grolier Club to the performances by Von Siegen, Prince Rupert, Von Furstenberg and Vaillant. They have that indescribable but easily felt feeling of life throughout all their plates; that thing that comes from feeling for life instead of method. The force of men who have the courage to be inventors gave largeness to their interpretations of paintings. Why they should be even more decorative than the later and more expert

mezzotinters I do not know, but so I feel them to be.

The orthodox Grolier Club, however, will reject this too exclusive ruling. The usual collector, and of course the Grolier Club includes some usual collectors, drifts into such an admiration for brilliant impressions, and even rare states, that art and the human equation for him vanishes. For brilliancy your expert mezzotinter cannot be beaten, but to some sensitive minds there are many excellences besides the mechanical.

The catalogue has been prepared with care by a clever but anonymous authority, whose preface has literary style. Here is a choice morsel from it. He has been speaking of the brilliant procession of feminine portraits with which the engravers have "extra illustrated" English history and tells a story that is piquantly disclosed by Angelo, the fencer, who went with Gainsborough, and Abel, the musician, to Windsor and there saw a portrait of Queen Henrietta Maria, in white satin, by Van Dyke. The conversation before it as recorded in Angelo's Memoirs was begun by Gainsborough:

"That woman had taste," said he; "why do not the Frenchwomen dress with that exquisite simplicity now? But she was the daughter of Henry the Fourth! Ye gods! how the French have degenerated!"

"Yes," said Abel, who was a man of observation; "but howsoever dat may be, vot a strange degeneracy of your country-womans for to imitate all the drump-derry fashions from France!"

"True," replied Gainsborough; "I once, in conversing with his Majesty upon the subject of modern fashions took the liberty to say your painters should be employed to design the costumes."

"Vell; and I should tesire to know vot observations his Majesty returned, as he is a brince of cultivated taste."

"What observation, man! Why, the King said, 'You are right, Mister Gainsborough, I am entirely of your opinion. Why do not you and Sir Joshua set about it?' adding, 'but they are bewitching enough as it is—hey, Gainsborough, hey!'"

"And what did you reply to dat?"

"Why, like a saucy dog as I am—what our gracious King listened to—and only answered with a smile. I said (faith, I am ashamed to repeat it), 'Yes, and please your Majesty—it were as well to leave the dowdy angels alone.'"

Notes and Activities in the World of Art

"That's a damned fine piece of painting. He's a damned fine painter," said Capt. John Oakman recently upon seeing Ernest Lawson's "Toledo Bridge" upon the white walls of the Coffee House.

These military art criticisms have a directness and force that are admirable. No doubt the artist will regard this criticism as perfectly satisfactory. The fact is, of course, that all an artist ever desires to hear from a critic is "Yes" or "No." All the real art criticisms of the winter could be encompassed upon one of these pages. But all of our readers are not producers. Non-producers require the pill to be sugar coated.

The exhibition of decorations and portraits by Henri Caro-Delvaile and medals by Theodore Spicer-Simson has had so much success in the new galleries of Gimpel & Wildenstein that an extension of time has been granted it. It will remain on view until February 16.

The Clyde Fitch collection at the American Art Association is having what might be called a "Success of tears." There is a constant succession of females in the rooms who look at the old prints, the tapestries, the quaint silver and carvings through blurred eyes, murmuring audibly "Poor dear Clyde," as they brush away the furtive tear.

JOHN LEVY GALLERIES

IMPORTANT FORTHCOMING EXHIBITION

THE SANDEN Collection of AMERICAN PAINTINGS *Just bought En Bloc*

ALEX. H. WYANT

Ten Examples

HORATIO WALKER

Nine Examples

J. FRANCIS MURPHY

Four Examples

DAVID W. TRYON

Nine Examples

OPENING FEB. 6th
14 EAST 46TH ST.

Opposite the Ritz-Carlton

LA PLACE ANTIQUE SHOP

Artistic and Useful Gifts

OBJECTS OF ART

and Period Furniture

Ancient Art Works & Faithful Copies
Telephone Madison Square 707

242 Fifth Avenue (2nd St.)

Branch—11 East 43rd Street

NOW ON FREE VIEW

SATINOVER GALLERIES

3 West 56th Street

SEVERAL large collections just arrived from abroad, including many RARE MASTERPIECES of the Fourteenth to Eighteenth Centuries.

Bureau of Expertizing and Appraisals

Owing to the changed and peculiar conditions brought about by the entrance of the United States into the world war there has arisen a desire on the part of many Americans of late who have gathered in Europe and have a taste for the best of art, and of others who wish to consider superior art works as good investments—to acquire the same—and at the same time there has come to many others through increased cost of living and falling fortunes, the desire or necessity of disposing of their art possessions.

We are frequently called upon to point out the value of art works for collection and estates, for the purpose of insuring said art works especially to determine whether prior appraisals made to fix the amount due under the inheritance or death taxes are just and correct ones—and often find that such former appraisals have been made by persons not qualified by experience or knowledge of art quality or market values, with resultant deception and often overpayment of taxes, etc. Further particulars upon request. Charges moderate.

American Art News Company
Publishers of America's Only Art Weekly
15-17 East 46th St., New York City

ANTIQUITIES

OLD FABRICS

DAWSON

WORKS OF ART

9 East 56th St.

Between 5th & Madison Avenues

TAPESTRIES

DECORATIONS